Update: Ongoing Inquiry into Melioidosis Illness at Tulane National Research Center

Late November 2014, two non-human primates in the breeding colony at the Tulane National Primate Research Center (TNPRC), a private research facility, became ill; one of the two was euthanized, the other one fully recovered. In mid- December 2014, samples submitted to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified Burkholderia Pseudomallei as the causative agent. This strain of bacteria is not endemic in the US but was the subject of research at TNPRC. Because Burkholderia Pseudomallei is a tier 1 agent and the material was considered not in containment, the CDC and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) initiated a joint investigation of TNPRC in January 2015. As part of the investigation conducted January 20-24, federal and state scientists visited the TNPRC site to conduct epidemiological study and to review lab practices to determine possible route of transmission.

Recently, one of the investigators fell ill with unspecific symptoms. A blood test was conducted and test results from Friday, February 6th indicated a presence of antibodies in the blood indicating some exposure to BURKHOLDERIA PSEUDOMALLEI. The investigator was discharged from the hospital Sunday and she is no longer sick. The person's travel history does include a visit to a region that may have provided an opportunity for exposure. Federal and state agencies are aggressively trying to determine if the illness was related to the facility visit or past travel.

The other members of the investigative team are being tested for possible exposure to the bacteria for baseline comparison and possible future diagnosis. This testing will provide some indication regarding route of transmission.

The CDC, USDA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), are working with Tulane University as well as state and local officials to identify, isolate, mitigate and prevent further transmission of BURKHOLDERIA PSEUDOMALLEI within TNPRC. Environmental testing, including air, water, soil sampling, will guide remediation activities. Once samples are collected, it will take 1-2 weeks to obtain results.

Situational Update: Thursday, February 19, 2015, as of 2pm CST: FROM CDC:

CDC:

-Additional testing this week indicated a fourth non-human primate exhibited antibodies to Burkholderia pseudomallei at the Tulane National Research Primate Center breeding colony. The animal's only contact with the three others monkeys (two of which were diagnosed with Meliodosis and the other just showing an immune response to exposure) was at the center's veterinary clinic. CDC and USDA/APHIS investigators, as part of their ongoing efforts, will focus efforts on the veterinary clinic as a possible source of cross-contamination between the animals. The investigation into how the bacteria may have migrated to the primate colony from the select agent laboratory continues.

-Nine environmental air samples sent to CDC from EPA investigators tested negative for Burkholderia pseudomallei, indicating the bacterium is not in the air on the research center campus. Soil and water sample testing is underway with results expected over the next couple of weeks.

-Another blood sample will be taken from the USDA/APHIS select agent inspector who visited the research center in January 2015 and whose previous two blood samples indicated a consistent immune response to exposure to Burkholderia pseudomallei. This test result will help CDC experts determine if the inspector's exposure to the bacterium was at the primate research center in January or from a previous event. The inspector indicated to a CDC epidemiologist on Feb. 7, 2015, that she had traveled previously to a region of the world where Burkholderia pseudomallei is endemic. Test results should be known by Monday, February 23RD.

-CDC is committed to the health security of Americans and will continue to fully investigate this incident.

Tulane:

-Continues to work with federal and state officials to determine how the non-human primates may have contracted the bacteria.

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH):

-On Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2015, DHH assisted Tulane with obtaining blood samples from Tulane's staff for serological testing. CDC questionnaires were administered and 11 blood samples were obtained. Ten samples will be sent to CDC for serological testing and one sample will be banked at the request of the individual.

-DHH staff will enter any CDC lab test results into the ongoing database and directly communicate results to Louisiana residents as they become available.

-DHH continues support by attending daily UCG meetings at the St. Tammany EOC to obtain visibility on multi-agency response activities;

- o participates in TNPRC conference calls to offer epidemiologic opinion;
- o serves as liaison between CDC subject matter experts and the State Health Officer;
- o and serves as liaison between subject matter experts at Tulane and the state response personnel.

Melioidosis, also called Whitmore's disease, is an infectious disease that can infect humans or animals and is treatable with antibiotics. The disease is caused by the bacterium *Burkholderia pseudomallei*.
It is predominately a disease of tropical climates, especially in Southeast Asia and northern Australia where it is widespread. The bacteria causing melioidosis are found in contaminated water and soil. It is spread to humans and animals through direct contact with the contaminated source. It is not known to spread from human to human or from animal to human.

CDC's role is to protect the health and safety of researchers and the public. For more information about melioidosis, visit http://www.cdc.gov/melioidosis/index.html. Questions regarding the investigation and remediation activities should be directed to CDC (Jason McDonald) at 404-387-3660. Questions regarding

the TPNRC facility should be directed to Tulane (Mike Strecker) at 504-512-1347. All other questions or concerns should be directed to Mike Steele at Mike.Steele@La.gov .

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